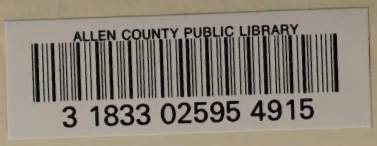
Gc
977.701
W72h

Gc
977.701
W72h
1758105



M. L

REYNOLDS HISTORICAL
GENEALOGY COLLECTION

Gc

Please check index in back
pocket after each use

Compliments of B. F. Gue
Oct 3 1890

Winnebago County,

IOWA,

ITS HISTORY, RESOURCES

—AND—

NATURAL ADVANTAGES.

By W. C. HAYWARD,

Editor of the WINNEBAGO PRESS.

FOREST CITY, IOWA:

HAYWARD & HALVORSEN, PUBLISHERS.

1873.

1758105

PREFACE.

The people of the Eastern States, besides listening often to the sublime injunction of the late HORACE GREELEY to "Go West," have been supplied with numberless pages of Western literature, from the dime novel to the voluminous history, and all devoted more or less to a description of the land whose border is lost in the golden haze of sunset. But,as a rule, writers have seldom confined themselves to any particular locality; they preferring rather to deal in generalities,—describing with poetic fervor the charms of our west-land—it's rolling prairies,it's crystal streams, it's virgin soil, it's pure free air and healthful breezes, —and the thousand other unnumbered attractions and advantages that are possessed no where else. Thus "the west," viewed as a whole from the descriptions by general writers, would seem to be a boundless Eldorado, each particular portion possessing all the advantages of any other, and thus leaving, as it were, no choice of location. But all must be aware that such is not the case. Each particular portion of the West has it's advantages and it's *dis*-advantages. For example, one locality is well supplied with timber, while another is not,—one is well watered with running streams, whereas in another place water is obtained only by digging wells. In one place stock raising is a paying pursuit, and in another farmers find that the cultivation of grain is the most profitable vocation. Frequently, however, a locality is found which combines to a certain extent the advantages of all the rest, and a particular branch of agriculture is optional, and not compelled.—Then, too, in certain localities certain advantages are possessed by reason of accessable markets, railroad communication, mills, schools, society in general, and a hundred other things that suggest themselves to the minds of those seeking homes in a new country.

The object of these few pages is to show the particular advantages of the territory embraced within the subject of our sketch—to give, briefly, it's past history, and show its present and prospective advantages as viewed in the light of inducements to immigration and the investment of capital; and if in this way we induce any to forsake the old ruts, rocks, and stumps of Eastern barren hillsides, and seek homes on our broad rich prairies, we shall have accomplished our purpose, and will consider our labor not in vain.

WINNEBAGO COUNTY.

Its History, Resources, and Natural Advantages.

STATE OF IOWA.

The State of Iowa embraces within its limits an area of about fifty-six thousand square miles of territory, located between the two great rivers of the continent—Mississippi and Missouri,—and boasts a greater area of tillable soil than any other equal amount of territory in the United States. The surface of the State is remarkably uniform, with no mountains, and yet but little of the surface is level or flat. The highest land is in the north-west part of the State, and the lowest in the south-east; the general slope of the surface being a gradual descent from north-west to south-east.

The State is divided into ninety-nine counties, with an average size of five hundred and sixty square miles of territory, or about 358,400 acres of land each.

WINNEBAGO COUNTY

Is the middle one of the most northern tier of counties in the State, there being five counties east of it, and five west. It is bounded on the north by the State of Minnesota, on the east by Worth county, south by Hancock county, and on the west by Kossuth county. It is twenty-four miles across the county from east to west, and a fraction less than eighteen miles north and south, embracing twelve congressional townships, to-wit: 98, 99 and 100, of ranges 23, 24, 25 and 26—the north four being fractional. The county contains an area of about four hundred square miles, or 256,000 acres of land.

SURFACE.

The surface is slightly and desirably varied; there being very few high bluffs or prominent ledges, and very little perfectly flat or level country, the general surface of the county being of that character termed "gently rolling," thus affording natural and easy drainage, and giving ample facilities for thorough cultivation.

SOIL.

The soil consists mostly of a dark loam, with a mixture of sand, rendering it very productive, and suited to a rapid and vigorous growth of vegetation. It is from two to four feet deep, with a subsoil, below which gravel appears in some places, and in others yellow clay or hard-pan. The soil throughout the entire county is, without exception, exceedingly fertile, and adapted to the successful cultivation of all grain s grasses and fruits indigenous or acclimated to our northern latitude.

PRODUCTIONS.

The staple productions are wheat, oats, corn, barley, and potatoes, but all other different varieties of grain raised in the State do well.—Buckwheat, millet, broom-corn, sorghum, flax and tobacco have been raised in small quantities, and with a flattering degree of success.—Garden vegetables in endless variety are raised in large quantities, and attain great perfection. The tame grasses, including timothy, red-top, and clover, have been cultivated by a few persons, to a limited extent, and in every instance have exhibited remarkably rapid and luxuriant growth. They have not been cultivated to any great extent for the reason that the large quantity and excellent quality of the native grasses have proved more than sufficient to meet the wants of our farmers and others engaged in stock raising. Wheat yields commonly from fifteen to twenty-five bushels per acre, although as high as forty bushels per acre have been raised. Corn produces from forty to eighty bushels per acre, and oats from fifty to seventy-five bushels. The highest figures given will probably be reached with but few exceptions where a thorough and careful system of cultivation is carried on. The advantages for stock raising, and the production of butter and cheese, can hardly be excelled. The immense quantities of native grass, the broad ranges of pasturage, pure water, timber protection, &c., render stock raising a peculiarly easy and profitable vocation.

FRUIT.

Although but little attention has been given to the cultivation of tame fruits, still there are a few of our most enterprising citizens who have proved by actual experiment, that with care and attention quite a variety of tame fruits may be successfully cultivated. About fifty bushels of apples were raised in the county last season. Several varieties of grapes and cherries have been raised, and seem to do well.—The small fruits, such as currants, gooseberries, strawberries, &c., &c., are raised with ease and in large quantities. Wild fruits of various

kinds grow in great abundance. Wild plums and grapes are found along the banks of streams where protected by timber or brush, and in the larger groves, in large quantities, and of superior quality; the wild plums especially, in point of excellence, rivalling the tame and cultivated ones. Berries of different varieties abound in their season, also walnuts, butternuts and hazelnuts.

TIMBER.

Winnebago County, in addition to her other numerous natural advantages, possesses the one great desideratum above all others, viz, an abundance of native timber; there being within the county limits something over fifty thousand acres of timber land, and the timber nearly all of a good quality. It is located mostly in the east half of the county, the main body of timber extending north and south through range 23, and covering also the east part of township 98 in range 24. In section 7, of range 24, and section 12, of range 25, both in township 99, there is quite a large body of timber called "Coon Grove," a large portion of it consisting of black-walnut. There is also a fine grove, disconnected from the main body of timber, in the east part of the county, called "Benson Grove." It is located in sections 6 and 7 of township 98, and 30 and 31 of township 99, in range 23, and in sections 1 and 12, of township 98, and 25 and 26, in township 99, in range 24. Also in the north part of the county there is considerable timber scattered over the sections 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, and 36, all in township 100, and range 24. The western portion of the county consists entirely of prairie, with the exceptions only of a few scattering trees around a few small lakes. The heavy body of timber in the east part of the county lies mostly upon the east bank of Lime Creek, and follows the meandering course of the stream across the county boundary into other territory. The timber in the county consists of burr-oak, black-oak, basswood, poplar, black-walnut, butternut, cherry, elm, &c. These large groves of timber looming into view across the broad rolling prairies that stretch away to the westward, are a strong relief to the monotonous rise and fall of the almost boundless "billowy sea of land," and while they add beauty to the landscape, and charm the eyes of all beholders, they give thoughts of wealth and comfort to the possessers in person, and growth and prosperity to the country at large. An abundance of timber is certainly one of the greatest natural advantages that can be claimed by any prairie country, for it insures the prime essentials to rapid settlement and improvement,—

cheap fuel, cheap fencing, and cheap building material.

WATER STREAMS AND LAKES.

The largest stream of water flowing through the county is Lime Creek, a tributary of Shell Rock River. Lime Creek rises in Minnesota and flows in a southerly direction, crossing the northern boundary of Winnebago county about three miles from the north-east corner of the county. In its meandering course it passes through twenty-four sections, located in ranges twenty-three and twenty-four. It is from sixty to one hundred feet wide, of good depth, with gravel and stone bottom, and sufficient fall in many places to admit of use for manufacturing purposes. The water is clear and pure and abounds with fish of different kinds. Quite a number of small streams flow into Lime Creek both from the east and west. One of them called the Twister, enters Lime Creek in section 27, township 98, range 24. It is a stream of no small importance, draining and supplying water to a considerable extent of territory. Another from the west called Pike Run has its rise near Coon Grove and enters Lime Creek in section 25, township 99, range 23. From the east one of the principal tributaries is Bear Creek. It flows through sections 19, 30 and 31, in town 98, range 23, and 36, range 24, entering Lime Creek just a short distance south of the county line. Beaver Creek is a beautiful stream rising in Rice Lake in the east part of the county, and following south through the south eastern township in the county and forming a junction with Lime Creek in Cerro Gordo county. There are several streams in the west part of the county, tributary to the East Fork of the Des Moines river, and draining quite a large extent of territory. There are numerous small streams throughout the county that exist without names, but that nevertheless are of no small value to the country they traverse.

There are several beautiful lakes in the county, but none of them very extensive. Two small bodies of water in close proximity to each other, called Twin Lakes, are located in sections 20 and 21, town 100, range 24. Another small lake is in section 15, of the same town and range with Twin Lakes. There are several in the eastern and north eastern part of the county, and also in the western part. Taken altogether the county is well supplied with an abundance of pure water; Sparkling and rippling over the pebbly beds of creeks and rivulets, gushing from the hill sides like the famous springs of Eastern Eden, and reflecting from the placid waters of sunny lakes, the changing fo-

liage and shady groves of bordering banks and gently sloping hill sides.

BUILDING MATERIAL.

The great abundance of timber in the county induced the erection of saw-mills at an early date, and native lumber is thus furnished in large quantities and at reasonable rates. Pine lumber can be obtained at Garner, a station on the M. & St- P. Railroad, fourteen miles south of Forest City, or at Austin, in Minnesota. At present the native lumber most in use is of hard wood, and in building is used for frame work, while pine is used mostly for shingles and finishing. Some however build wholly of pine, others wholly of native lumber. A brick yard is in operation near Forest City every summer, and brick of a superior quality are manufactured. They are furnished at from $8 to $10 per thousand. Sufficient stone has been found thus far for foundations although no extensive quarries have been opened. Lime is manufactured from stone found along the banks of the streams and lakes. Taken altogether the facilities for building are considerably in advance of those of most of the counties in the State, and the completion of a north and south railroad through the county making direct connection with the vast pineries of Minnesota and Wisconsin will add still more to the possessed advantages of cheap building material.

FENCING.

Material for fencing is found in the the extensive groves of native timber. Burr-oak is used for posts, and red-oak, poplar, elm and butternut for rails. Some board fences have been built, using burr-oak for posts, and pine or native lumber for panels.

FUEL.

Winnebago county is most generously supplied with fuel. In addition to the large amount of timber, the county contains at least two thousand acres of peat land. From the report of the State Geologist we learn that the peat beds of Winnebago county average at least six feet in depth, and that the estimated quantity of dry peat per acre for each foot in depth, is two hundred and fifty tons. Upon this basis there is then in the county three million tons of peat, equal to as many cords of dry hickory wood. The great advantage connected with the peat beds, is the fact that they are situated in the parts of the county where there is no timber, and are also so generally distributed as to not admit of a monopoly being made of them by scheming capitalists. Peat as yet, has never been made use of to any great extent for the

reason that dead and down timber has been obtainable in quantities sufficient to meet the wants of the people. Dr. White, the State Geologist, estimates that 160 acres of peat, four feet deep, will supply two hundred and thirteen families with fuel for upwards of twenty-five years. Some perhaps would infer that the presence of these peat beds might be prejudicial to health, such, however, is not the case. The dry, rolling prairie land usually comes up to the very border of the peat marsh, and the winds or breezes which prevail through the summer season do not allow water to become stagnant.

CLIMATE.

There is probably no place on the continent that can truthfully boast a more healthful climate than Northern Iowa. The atmosphere is clear, pure and bracing, and the water in the lakes or marshes never becomes stagnant. Enough snow usually falls in the winter to afford good sleighing, and sudden changes to rain and mud very seldom occur. High winds are of common occurrence, but violent and destructive tornadoes are unknown. Under the head of 'Climate and Health,' in "*Iowa, the Home for Immigrants,*" we find the following in regard to Northern Iowa, which is so truthfully expressive of the reality that we quote it entire:

"The opinion may prevail to some extent that the climate, especially of Northern Iowa, is rigorous, and the winters long and severe. It is true that the mercury sinks lower than in the States further south, but at the same time the atmosphere is dry and invigorating, and the seasons not marked by the frequent and sudden changes which are experienced in latitudes further south. The winters are equally as pleasant and more healthful than in the Eastern or Middle States.—Pulmonary and other diseases, arising from frequent changes of temperature, and miasmatic influences are almost unknown, unless contracted elsewhere. Winter usually commences in December and ends in March. The spring, summer and fall months are delightful. Iowa is noted for the glory and beauty of its autumns. That gorgeous season denominated "Indian Summer," cannot be described, and in Iowa it is peculiarly charming. Day after day, for weeks, the sun is veiled in a hazy splendor, while the forests are tinged with the most gorgeous hues, imparting to all nature something of the enchantments of fairy land. Almost imperceptibly, these golden days merge into winter, which holds its stern reign without the disagreeable changes experienced in other climes, until spring ushers in another season of life and

beauty. And so the seasons pass, year after year, in our beautiful and healthful Iowa.

ORGANIZATION.

The county was organized in the fall of 1857, and county officers elected for the first term as follows: Robert Clark, Judge; C. H. Day, Treasurer and Recorder; B. F. Denslow, Clerk; John S. Blowers, Sheriff; C. W. Scott, Superintendent and Surveyor. The county seat was located in October, of 1858, by the following regularly appointed commissioners, viz: T. E. Brown, of Polk county; Dr. William Church, of Webster county; Dr. William Farmer, of Boone county. The commissioners, after careful examination into merits of different localities in the county, finally made selection of the east half the northeast quarter of section thirty-five, township ninety-eight, range twenty-four, where in the fall of 1857, Robert Clark laid out the town of Forest City. The location is perhaps not so central as might be wished but at the same time, it is accessible to all parts of the county by good roads, and is no farther distant from the extreme portions of the county than the seat of government in many other counties of the State; it being only seventeen miles from the northern boundary of the county

OFFICIAL RECORD.

Since the organization of the county, the following persons have filled the several county offices:

JUDGES.—Robert Clark, J. K. Boyd, and Samuel Tennis.

AUDITORS.—Samuel Tennis, and Hiram K. Landru.

CLERKS.—B. F. Denslow, A. K. Curtis, J. H. T. Armbrose, E. D. Hinman, and Eugene Secor.

TREASURERS AND RECORDERS.—C. H. Day, and David Secor.

TREASURERS.—David Secor, and Robert Clark.

RECORDERS.—J. P. Gardner, H. S. Botsford, N. K. Landru and E. L. Stilson.

SHERIFFS.—John S. Blowers, M. P. Goodell, A. P. Harper, C. Lutz, Hiram K. Landru and Peter Lewis.

SUPERINTENDENTS.—C. W. Scott, B. F. Denslow, M. Bumgardner, E. D. Stockton, Augustus Oulman, C. A. Steadman, M. Cooper, and A. L. Shay.

SURVEYORS.—C. W. Scott, Augustus Oulman, J. H. T. Armbrose, and W. C. Hayward.

COUNTY OFFICERS AT PRESENT TIME.—Auditor and Clerk of the Board of Supervisors, Hiram K. Landru; Clerk of District and Circuit

Courts, Eugene Secor; Treasurer, Robert Clark; Recorder, E. L. Stilson; Sheriff, Peter Lewis; Superintendent, A. L. Shay; Surveyor, W. C. Hayward; Supervisors, W. O. Hanson, (chairman,) Forest Township; C. D. Smith, Pleasant Township; A. N. Brones, Iowa Township.

POPULATION.

The population of the county in 1859, was 188; in 1860, 268; in 1863, 204; in 1865, 298; in 1867, 785; in 1869, 1072; in 1870, 1572 and at present writing (1873) the population of the county no doubt reaches 2500.

EARLY SETTLEMENT.

The earliest white settler of the county was John Maben, Esq., who, with his family, moved into the county in the fall of 1855, taking a claim on the east side of Lime Creek, near where Forest City is now located. Mr. Thomas Bearas took a claim near Mr. Maben, during the same fall, but did not remain as a permanent settler. Mr. Maben has remained in the country since his first settlement here; he is at present County Treasurer of Hancock county, and owns an extensive farm about three miles south of Forest City. Several other settlers soon followed Mr. Maben, among whom were John Gilchrist, J. C. Bonar and Philip Tennis. Mr. Bonar now resides in Hancock county, about two miles south east from Forest City.

During the summer of 1856 several other families settled in the south east part of the county, among whom were Robert Clark, John S. Blowers, A. T. Cole, Henry Allan, James L. Hitt, Robert Stephens, Ira Plummer and Daniel Martin. The first three, Robert Clark, John S. Blowers and A. T. Cole, are still residing in the county; Robert Clark at present filling the office of County Treasurer.

The next settlement was made in the northern part of the county, in the fall of 1856, by Samuel Tennis, Archibald Murray and William Gilbert. A little later, during the same fall, the settlement was enlarged by the addition of several families, among whom were Charles D. Smith, William Porter and John Anderson, who all settled in the immediate vicinity of Lake Mills. Mr. Smith is still a resident of Lake Mills, and is a member of the Board of County Supervisors.

In 1857 some nine families of Norwegians settled in the northeast part of the county. Among them were Oliver Peterson, Colburn Larson, John Johnson, H. J. Knudson, John Iverson, Christian Anderson and Louis Nelson. All are still residents of the county, with the ex-

ception of Louis Nelson, who died three years ago last fall. This class of the population of the county did not receive any further accessions until 1865, but since that time there has been a heavy immigration, so that at present they constitute fully one half the population of the county; there being somewhere in the neighborhood of four hundred families of Norwegians, Swedes and Danes; the Norwegians being in the majority. The balance of the population of the county is made up almost entirely of Americans; there being,however,a few Germans and Irish.

Up to the year 1867, the settlements were confined to the immediate vicinity of the groves along Lime Creek. In this year Mr. John Millington settled at "Coon Grove" in the central part of the county, and since then other families have located in the same vicinity.

At the present date, the three townships on the west side of the county are without settlers. In the second tier of townships from the west, there are some twelve or fifteen families, they having located there within the last two years. As heretofore stated, the western portion of the county contains but little timber; the prairie land,however, is considered of excellent quality; and when the numerous advantages of our portion of Northern Iowa are fully recognized, it will become thickly dotted with farms and gardens of those energetic ones, who, in the days to come, will flock from the thickly settled, over-burdened East, to the broad rolling prairies, and boundless freedom of our glorious West.

Northern Iowa is not, to-day, what it was sixteen years ago. The hardships and privations experienced by those earliest settlers, who faced the dangers and discouragements of frontier life, now furnish subjects for fireside stories, to listening, wondering ones, who, with the comforts and pleasant surroundings of the present, can scarcely credit these narratives of the past. In those early days, sixteen years ago,the long winters were often scenes of privation and suffering hardly creditable. There were no mills,no stores,no railroads,in this part of Iowa then; and more than once, a husband and father traversed the trackless prairie, clear to Decorah, in Winnesheik county, nearly a hundred miles over the drifted snow, through storms and windsand returned, drawing upon a simple hand sled the provisions necessary to keep his suffering family from actual starvation. Often inventive genius came to the aid of these hardy pioneers, and we have heard of several instances where hand-sleds of a large size were rigged out with

sails and rudders, and then before the breeze they sped away over the snow-crested billowy sea of land, like phantom ships on the briny ocean.

Occasionally an encounter with a bear or some marauding band of Indians would give excitement to every day life, and furnish themes for future historians. Probably as fierce an encounter as ever was known within the history of the county, occurred but a short distance above the present site of Forest City, between Mr. Thomas Bearas and an immense black bear. The account as narrated now, by those who were living here at that time, is about as follows: Mr. Bearas had nearly exhausted his supply of provisions, a peck of beans and ten pounds of flour being the contents of his larder, and in the hope of making the little that was left last until the weather would warrant his starting on the hundred mile trip to the nearest market, he started out, early one frosty morning in January, 1856, with a double barelled shot gun, with the determination of securing a deer or some other wild game to help lengthen out his supply of provisions. In the middle of the forenoon he struck a deer track, and judging from appearances that the deer was but a short distance ahead, he pushed forward in pursuit;—several times he came within sight and easy range, but just as his gun was leveled, away went the deer, while our baffled hunter still followed after; and thus the hours wore away until nearly night. Mr. Bearas had become somewhat exhausted, and giving up the chase turned wearily homeward. When within about a mile of home, and a mile and a half of where the Court House in Forest City now stands, a rustling in the bushes near by attracted his attention. He raised his gun in readiness for a shot at the expected deer, when out stepped a bear, as black as Satan, and large as a small elephant. Mr. B. leveled his gun and fired both barrels at once; but as luck would have it, just as he pulled the triggers, a small stick he was standing on, rolled, his foot slipped, and the gun was thrown out of range; the buck-shot went rattling through the tree tops, while old bruin made a charge on Mr. B., who, throwing away his gun, seized a dirk knife which he happened to have fastened in his belt, and braced himself for the contest. The bear raising upon his hind legs sprang upon him with open jaws, crushing him to the ground and rolling completely over him. As he fell Mr. B. plunged his knife to the hilt in old bruins body, but reached no fatal spot, and only enraged him the more; again and again the knife was plunged into the body; in the meanwhile however the beast had torn nearly all the flesh from Mr. B's face, had utterly crushed his left hand

and lacerated him fearfully in many places. The snow for a rod around was literally soaked with blood that flowed from both; and still both fought on with all the desperation of rage on one side and despair on the other. They rolled over, groans and cries followed each additional wound, and still with maddening fierceness they fought on; but at last, by a lucky stroke the knife reached old bruins heart, and he rolled over, dead at last. Mr. B. with the last stroke of the knife had summoned his entire strength, and as the knife went home he fainted. In a short time, however, he recovered sufficiently to crawl to the edge of the timber where he was discovered by one of his neighbors and taken care of. The terrible fierceness of the contest can be imagined when we state that upon examination there were found on the bear *twenty-four* different wounds from the sharp blade of the dirk knife.

TOWNS AND VILLAGES.

Forest City, the County Seat of Winnebago County,—is located on the east half of section 35, township 98, north, range 14, west, on the west bank of Lime Creek, just a half mile from the south line of the county. The location is high and rolling, situated mostly on the prairie, the northern portion of the town as laid out however, extending just into the edge of the timber; Lime Creek, flowing on the east side, so as to cross the northeast corner of the town plat. The town is protected on the east and northeast by a heavy body of timber, but on the south and west the prairie extends its rolling surface as far as the eye can reach, the almost endless monotony of billowy land being somewhat broken, however, and the view relieved, by several groves of timber that skirt the borders of two or three small lakes in the southwest. The town was laid out in the fall of 1856, by Hon. Robert Clark, who entered the land under the pre-emption law sometime during that year. The lots are each 132 feet long by 66 feet wide; streets 66 feet wide, and alleys just half the width of the streets. The first post office in the county was established at Forest City, this same fall, with Robert Clark as postmaster. No contracts had yet been let by the government for carrying the mail to this point, and the settlers in Winnebago, Hancock and Cerro Gordo counties, clubbed together and hired at times different ones to make an occasional trip to the nearest post-office, where communication was had with the outside world by means of government transportation; this nearest post-office at that time being Cedar Falls, over a hundred miles distant from Forest City. The same fall the first store in the county was opened by Mr. Clark, who

exposed for sale a small stock of dry goods, groceries and other essentials to modern civilization. Mr. Clark, also the same fall, put up a steam saw mill, which still remains and does good work, a new engine, however, having been procured since that time. For a short time Forest City, as a town, seemed to flourish equal to the best hopes of it founder. New settlers moved in, the county was organized, county seat located at Forest City, and all was prosperous. But the civil war of the rebellion, and other connecting causes, stopped the inflowing tide of immigration, and the town for many years seemed to stand still. During the past year, however, the place has taken a new start, new business blocks and residences have been built and business rapidly increased. Several of the buildings put up within the last year or two, are of brick, and would do credit to towns of larger size. Three large, two story buildings, with solid stone basements, have been built for stores, and they at present are well filled with extensive stocks of general merchandise. Forest City now contains four general stores; one hardware store and tin shop; one hotel; one wagon and carriage factory; one steam saw mill; one cabinet shop; one harness shop; one shoe shop; one tailor shop; two millinery shops; three blacksmith shops; one billiard hall; one restaurant; one printing office; two physicians; three attorneys; eight land agents; one small school house and a fine ten thousand dollar one under contract, (a large two story brick school house was burned down a little more than a year ago) and a post office. An extensive steam flouring mill is now being built and will be in operation by the first of June. The Free Masons have a lodge here of about sixty members. They own a fine lodge room—a hall 24x60 feet—and are in a flourishing condition.

Lake Mills—is located on the northwest quarter of the southwest quarter of section 2, township 99, north range 23, west, on the east side of Lime Creek, not far from the north end of Rice Lake, and about fifteen miles northeast of Forest City, the county seat. It is beautifully situated in the grove—surrounded on all sides by timber, that amply protects it from the heavy winds and driving storms of either summer or winter. The surrounding country is adapted to farming and stock raising, and probably no part of the county offers better inducements to immigration than in the immediate vicinity of Lake Mills. The town was laid out in the fall of 1869, by C. D. Smith, Esq. Blocks one and two, as platted, are each sixteen rods square; all others are sixteen by eighteen rods, all, of course, sub-divided into lots. The first post office

in the place was established in the spring of 1867, with S. D. Wadsworth as postmaster. In the fall of 1867 Messrs. S. D. Wadsworth and C. D. Smith put up a Steam Grist Mill, and also connected with it a saw mill and wool carding machine. All were in successful operation until the 31st of August, 1871, when, from some unknown cause, the buildings took fire and were totally consumed. The entire loss at the time was estimated at $15,000. But the indomitable pluck and energy of the proprietors was manifested in the immediate erection of a new steam grist mill, larger and better than the old one, that is now in operation and doing good work.—The saw and carding attachments were not rebuilt. A store was opened in the place in the fall of 1867, by Mr. S. D. Wadsworth, who still continues in the business. Another store was opened the same fall by Mr. L. Stilson, who subsequently sold out, and is now residing at Forest City. A fine large two story school house was burned down a short time ago.—It will probably be replaced by a new one this summer. The following list includes the business firms and professional men now in the town:—One steam grist mill; one hotel; two general stores; one drug store; one hardware store and tin shop; one wagon shop; two blacksmith shops; one harness shop; one shoe shop; one physician; two land agents and a post office.

Benson Grove—is located on the southwest quarter of the south east quarter of section 36, township 99, range 24 west. It is pleasantly situated on the south and east of the body of timber from which it derives its name, on the east side of Lime Creek, and about six miles north of Forest City. The town was laid out by J. B. Hill, Esq., in the summer of 1867. Mr. Hill at the same time opened a general dry goods and grocery store. A post office was secured soon after this with Mr. Hill as postmaster. With the exception of two good school houses, no improvements have been made since the summer of 1867. The surrounding country is mostly dry, rolling prairie, and offers many advantages to farming and stock raising.

SCHOOLS.

At the present writing there are twenty schools in operation within the county, distributed as follows: Forest township 2; Center township 9; Iowa township 3; Pleasant township 3; Norway township 3. Schools are in session at least six months in the year. Teachers receive from $25 to $50 per month. Most of the school houses in the county are good buildings, and are well furnished with maps, charts, &c. Two of the largest school buildings in the county—one located at Forest City and the other

at Lake Mills—have been burned down within the past year and a half. The school at Forest City is now divided into two departments, one being taught in the basement story of one of the business blocks, and the other in a small school house near by. A fine large brick school building is to be erected this summer.

RELIGION.

There are three regular Methodist organizations within the county, two at Forest City and one at Lake Mills. The Congregationalists and Lutherans also have organizations within the county. The latter, together with one Methodist class, are composed mostly of Scandinavians, who constitute about one half the population of the county. There are two organized Sabbath Schools within the county, one at Forest City and one at Lake Mills. No churches have yet been built; services being held in school houses, except at Forest City, where the court room in the second story of the court house, is used. A fine brick church is to be built this summer at Forest City by the Norwegian Methodists.

PUBLIC IMPROVEMENTS.

In the year of 1861 the county built a two story brick court house, 28x 36 feet on the ground. The lower story is divided into three offices, hall and stairway. One of the offices is occupied by the County Treasurer, one by the County Recorder, and the other by the County Auditor and the Clerk of the District and Circuit Courts. The upper story is all in one room, and for nearly ten years, being the only hall in town, has been used for public purposes of every description. Balls, concerts, shows, parties, festivals, religious meetings, courts and courting—all in the historic hall of the court house. Within the last two years, however, new halls have been built, and the old court house is not used for such a variety of purposes.

Five large bridges have been built by the county. Four across Lime Creek and one across the Twister; and considerable money has been expended in laying out and improving county roads. A large portion of the work of grading roads, building bridges, &c., is done by the townships independent of the county.

RAILROADS.

No railroads have yet been built through the county, but present indications point plainly to a different state of affairs soon. In the fall of 1870 the Burlington, Cedar Rapids & Minnesota Railway Company surveyed their line through the county, crossing the south boundary near Forest City, and continuing in a northwesterly direction toward Blue

Earth, Minnesota. This company entered into a contract with the citizens of Winnebago County, in which it was stipulated that the company should receive a five per cent tax on all taxable property of 1871, in the townships of Forest, Center, and Iowa, free right of way through the county, and a bonus of $10,000;—provided, the road were completed through the county by the first of January, 1873. For various reasons the contract on the part of the R. R. Company was not fulfilled and although, there is a strong probability that the road may be built through the county at no distant day, there is no direct assurance of such a fact.

During the same fall, the Iowa and Minnesota R. R. Company surveyed a line through the county, purposing to run from Fort Dodge to Wells, Minnesota. Their line as surveyed also passes through Forest City. During the past summer, this road was graded from Fort Dodge to Garner in Hancock county, (14 miles south of Forest City,) and at present writing (April 1873,) the route is established and contract let for doing the grading from Garner to Wells, Minnesota. The Railroad Engineer affirms positively that the cars will be running into Forest City on this road by the first of January next. The nearest railroad depot, at present, to the south part of the county, is Garner, on the Dakota division of the Milwaukee & St. Paul R. R., and the one nearest the north part of the county, Albert Lea, in Minnesota.

MAIL FACILITIES.

Mail is carried both ways every day, between Forest City and Garner. From Forest City there is a route running north via Benson Grove to Lake Mills, over which mail is carried, each way, twice a week; also a semi-weekly route from Forest City to Garner via. Ellington, in Hancock County. From Lake Mills the mail is carried north to Albert Lea, in Minnesota, twice a week and east to Northwood on the railroad, via. Bristol in Worth County, three times a week.

"THE WINNEBAGO PRESS."

The first number of the first newspaper published in Winnebago Co., struggled into existence on the 14th of June, 1867, with Will Kelly editor and proprietor. It was a small, four page, five column sheet, but nevertheless, was hailed by the citizens of Winnebago County as a herald of civilization, and an important aid to the rapid settlement, and consequent development of the material resources of the country. But Mr. Kelly seemed, somehow, to lack some of the prime essentials to success in newspaperdom, and almost immediately after starting the paper he sold out his interest to Messrs. Arthur Linn and J. C. Harwood, two

energetic and wide-awake young men from Charles City, in Floyd county, Iowa. Linn & Harwood continued the publication of the PRESS until the fall of 1869, when Mr. Linn sold his interest to Mr. Harwood. During this time the paper was enlarged to a six column sheet, and the circulation considerably increased. In the fall of 1870 Mr. Harwood enlarged the paper to seven columns, and in the month of July following, again increased its size by adding another column, making then a large handsome eight column paper, for size and general appearance second to none in Northern Iowa. In October, 1871, Mr. Harwood sold out to Messrs. Hayward & Halvorsen, the present proprietors The PRESS is now in its sixth year, is the official organ of the county, and the advertising medium of all leading business men in Winnebago County,as well as professionals, and land brokers in other counties of Northern Iowa.—It has a large circulation and professes to merits worthy the patronage of every land owner in this section of the State.

It may be of interest for some to know that the WINNEBAGO PRESS is printed on the oldest press in the State, and one that as such claims a very interesting historical record. This old press—now in use and apparently as good as when new—was first used on Iowa soil at Burlington in the year 1837, it then being the *first* and *only* press in the Territory. Since that time it has been in use in nearly every part of the State, and has even done valuable service in Wisconsin and Minnesota. Old settlers in Northern Iowa remember to have seen it in printing offices at Osage, Mitchell, Mason City, and Ellington. At last the old press brought up at Forest City, where it has been in almost daily use now nearly six years, and the present owners are willing to warrant it good for at least a hundred years more of active service.

RECAPITULATION.

In closing up the history of Winnebago County,we beg leave to review briefly the ground previously gone over, and present in this, the last chapter, a few of the most important characteristics, and leading natural advantages claimed by our portion of Northern Iowa. Although stated before, we deem it of sufficient importance to repeat, that *Winnebago County* is the middle one of the most northern tier of counties in the State, containing about 256,000 acres of land, of which 50,000 acres is timber. The surface in general is of a character termed "gently rolling," soil from two to four feet deep, exceedingly fertile and productive.—The staple productions are wheat, oats, corn, barley,and potatoes, although all other varieties of grain raised in the State do well. Garden vegetables of numerous va-

rieties are raised in large quantities. Tame fruits have been cultivated to a limited extent, and apparently do well. Wild fruits of various kinds flourish in great abundance. The country is well supplied with pure water by numerous streams and lakes. Good well water is obtained by digging from fifteen to thirty feet. The large amount of native timber, good clay for brick, and easy access to railroad and lumber depots, make building and fencing material comparatively cheap, and easy to obtain. The climate of this portion of Iowa can not be surpassed. Disease, in its various forms, finds no foothold here, where strong and vigorous health ever marks the effect of our free pure air, and salubrious clime. Real estate can be purchased here at rates that will allow even the *poorest* man to obtain a farm. Prairie land can be bought at from $4 to $6 per acre, and timber land at from $15 to $30; and with a small payment in advance, and security for the balance, almost any length of time asked for, will be given for completing payments. And now we ask of those of the over crowded East, who would seek homes midst the glorious freedom of our beautiful West, what more can be wished for ?—With thousands of acres of broad rolling prairie, stretching away to the meeting horizon—the monotony of its far reaching billowy sea of land broken by beautiful groves of native timber, and its varied surface intersected by numerous streams of clearest crystal, rippling with joyous murmur to the sea, their shores, neath the genial rays of a summer sun, lined with luxuriant foliage, ever casting its cool shadows over the limpid waters.—With soil unequalled in fertility by the famous gardens of the East, and a clime unsurpassed for salubrity by the glorious land of Italy,—with mines of hidden untold value in the undeveloped resources of the country, waiting only for the hand of enterprising man to bring forth and add to the wealth of our already prosperous State,—with the present advantages of cheap land, cheap timber, cheap building and fencing material, and the prospective advantages of railroads and manufacturies, we again repeat "What more could be wished for ?" Here are lands for the landless, homes for the homeless, mines of wealth for the manufacturer and builder, and banks of gold for the speculating tradesman.

ADVERTISEMENTS.

We take pleasure in calling especial attention to the advertisements found on the succeeding pages of the History. We have accepted none from parties who are not in every way perfectly reliable and straightforward business men. It will be noticed that, with but few exceptions, the advertisements are those of parties doing business in Forest City, and we refer to them as the liberal minded and at the same time efficient and successful business men of the town.

The following is a summary of the advertisements, each of which will repay a careful perusal: .

Secor & Burnap, Land Agents, Forest City, Iowa.
Robert Clark, Real Estate & Collllecting Agent, Forest City, Iowa.
Eugene Secor, Real Estate & Tax Paying Agent Forest City, Iowa.
E. L. Stilson, Hardware Merchant and County Recorder, Forest City, Iowa.
W. O. Hanson, Merchant, Forest City, Iowa.
J. W. Mahoney, Merchant, Forest City, Iowa.
Lunsett & Jenson, Wagonmakers and Blacksmiths, Forest City, Iowa.
R. H. Bahner, Harnessmaker, Forest City, Iowa.
Bahner & Knudtson, Proprietors of Tannery, Forest City, Iowa.
W. Westbury, Dealer in Furniture, Forest City, Iowa.
M. Cooper, Attorney at Law, Forest City, Iowa.
Ransom & Olmsted, Attorneys at Law, Forest City, Iowa.
W. H. Jones, Physician and Surgeon, Forest City, Iowa.
John Law, Proprietor of Photograph Gallery, Forest City, Iowa.
Forest City Hotel, P. N. Cobb, Proprietor, Forest City, Iowa.
A. Blennerhassett, Druggist, Forest City, Iowa.
Hayward & Halvorsen, Publishers, Forest City, Iowa.
Elder House, R. Elder, Proprietor, Garner, Iowa.
"The Farmer's Journal," Cedar Rapids, Iowa. We can recommend this as one of the leading Agricultural journals of the State.

Established in 1857.

Real Estate Agency

OF

ROBERT CLARK,

FOREST CITY, - - IOWA.

With an experience of sixteen years in the Real Estate business in Winnebago County, I am prepared to furnish reliable informatian in regard to almost every

TRACT OF LAND IN THE COUNTY.

I have a large list of lands, both improved and unimproved, for sale at low figures and easy terms. Also timber land in lots to suit purchasers.

ABSTRACT BOOKS.

In connection with the real estate agency, I have a complete set of abstract books showing the exact state of the title to every tract of land and town lot in the county.

In view of the many defective titles in the West, I would say

LOOK WELL TO YOUR TITLES.

ROBERT CLARK.
Forest City, Iowa

David Secor,
Member of Gen. Assembly.

W. A. Burnap,
Attorney at Law.

WINNEBAGO COUNTY LAND AGENCY

OF

Secor & Burnap,

FOREST CITY, IOWA.

200,000 Acres

Of Choice Land For Sale,

Including some of the best farms, finest prairie and timber in Winnebago County.

They have

Complete Abstract of Titles

To all Lands and Town Lots, and parties purchasing of them may feel assured that their title is perfect.

SPECIAL ATTENTION

Given to paying Taxes, Redeeming Lands Sold for Taxes, and Perfecting Defective Titles.

☞ Good References given to parties in any State of the Union.

EUGENE SECOR,

Real Estate,

AND

TAX PAYING AGENT

FOREST CITY, IOWA.

☞ Information cheerfully given.

E. L. STILSON,

HARDWARE MERCHANT,

Forest City, Iowa,

AND

County Recorder,

OF

WINNEBAGO CO.

Will pay taxes for non-residents, furnish abstract of titles, buy and sell real estate on commission, and do a general real estate agency business

ELDER HOUSE,

Garner, Hancock Co., Iowa.

175810

R. ELDER, Proprietor.

Everything New, Neat and Clean.

☞ Good Stabling, and at tentive hostlers.

ONLY ONE DOLLAR A YEAR.

THE

FARMERS JOURNAL,

PUBLISHED AT

Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

CONDUCTED BY THE FARMERS THEMSELVES.

Adopted by th State Agricultural Society as 'The Leading Farm paper of the State.'

Devoted especially to the development of Iowa.

Each number contains seventy-two columns of matter. is handsomely illustrated and filled with useful and practical articles on farm topics Send for sample copy. Address, FARMER'S JOURNAL,

Cedar Rapids, Iowa.

GEO. M. BAGWELL, Manager.
W. J. ABERNETHY Editor

J. W. MAHONEY,

Dealer in

Staple & Fancy Dry Goods,

GROCERIES &c.

Forest City, Iowa.

Established in 1869.

HARNESS SHOP!

Forest City, Iowa.

R. H. BAHNER,

Dealer in and manufacturer of harness double or single, saddles, bridles, collars, halters, trunks ladies satchels, fly-nets whips, &c. *Plastering hair for sale.*

Forest City Photograph Gallery!

JOHN LAW, - Proprietor,

Forest City, Iowa.

The Forest City Tannery,

R. H. Bahner & K. Knudtson,

PROPRIETORS.

The only Tannery in this part of the State. Tanning done on shares. Cash paid for hides.

Forest City, Iowa.

FOREST CITY HOTEL,

FOREST CITY, IOWA,

P. N COBB, - Proprietor.

This house has lately been refitted and refurnished throughout. Everything new, neat and tidy. Good stabling and attentive hostlers.

LIVERY IN CONNECTION WITH THE HOTEL.

W. WESTBURY,

Dealer in all kinds of

FURNITURE,

Forest City, Iowa.

Hayward & Halvorsen,

PUBLISHERS OF

THE WINNEBAGO PRESS,

AND

Job Printers,

Forest City, Iowa.

W. O. HANSON,

Dealer in

General Merchandise.

Corner Clark & K. Streets,

Forest City, Iowa.

WOOL

and other produce wanted,

Agent for the sale of tickets by steam and sail ships to and from Europe.

Wagon & Blacksmith Shop!

LUNSETT & JENSON,

PROPRIETORS,

FOREST CITY, IOWA.

WAGONS, BUGGIES,

SLEIGHS or CUTTERS,

Manufactured to order and satisfaction *GUARANTEED!*

We buy the best material, employ first class workmen, and sell at living prices.

☞ Repairing executed on reasonable terms.

Blacksmithing of all kinds executed on short notice, and at reasonable rates.

M. COOPER,

Att'y & Counselor at Law,

Forest City, Iowa.

Will practice in all the Courts of this State.

Collections made a specialty.

Office Established in 1867.

T. C. Ransom, W. W. Olmstead

RANSOM & OLMSTEAD,

ATTORNEYS AT LAW,

Real Estate & Collecting Agents,

Forest City,
Winnebago Co., Iowa.

W. H. JONES,

PHYSICIAN & SURGEON.

FOREST CITY, : : IOWA.

Will attend promptly to all calls in his line.

☞ **Office in Masonic Block.**

CITY DRUG STORE!

(*Opposite the Court House*).

FOREST CITY, - - IOWA.

A. BLENNERHASSETT, Proprietor.

—o—

A good supply of Drugs, Medicines, Fancy and Toilet articles, and choice Liquors for Medicinal and Mechanical purposes, and everything usually kept in a first class drug store constantly on hand.

5748

Gc
977
W72
175

Gc
977.701
W72h
1758105

INDEX TO:

WINNEBAGO COUNTY, IOWA:

ITS HISTORY, TESOURCES

AND NATURAL ADVANTAGES

W. C. HAYWARD, EDITOR

WINNEBAGO PRESS,

FOREST CITY, IOWA

HAYWARD & HALVORSEN

PUBLISHERS - 1873

ABERNETHY, W. J. 25
ALLAN, Henry 12
AMBROSE, J. H. T. 11
ANDERSON, Christian 12
ANDERSON, John 12

BAGWELL, George M. 25
BAHNER & KNUDTSON 22
BAHNER, R. H. 22, 26
BEARAS, Thomas 12, 14, 15
BENSON, --- 7, 17
BLENNERHASSETT, A. 22, 27
BLOWERS, John S. 11, 12
BONAR, J. C. 12
BOTSFORD, H. S. 11
BOYD, J. K. 11
BRONES, A. N. 12
BROWN, T. E. 11
BUMGARDNER, M. 11
BURNAP & SECOR 22, 24
BURNAP, W. A. 24

CHURCH, Dr. William 11
CLARK, Robert 11, 12, 15, 16, 22, 23
COBB, P. N. 22, 26
COLE, A. T. 12
COOPER, M. 11, 22, 27
CURTIS, A. K. 11

DAY, C. H. 11
DENSLOW, B. F. 11

ELDER, R. 22

FARMER, Dr. William 11

GARDNER, J. P. 11
GILBERT, William 12
GILCHRIST, John 12
GOODELL, M. P. 11

HALVORSEN, --- 20, 22, 26
HANSON, W. O. 12, 22, 27
HARPER, A. P. 11
HARWOOD, J. C. 19, 20
HAYWARD, W. C. 11, 12, 20, 22,
HILL, J. B. 17
HINMAN, E. D. 11
HITT, Jamel L. 12

IVERSON, John 12

JENSON & LUNSETT 22, 27
JOHNSON, John 12
JONES, Dr. W. H. 22, 27

KELLY, William 19
KNUDSON, H. J. 12
KNUDTSON & BAHNER 22
KNUDTSON, K. 26

LANDRU, Hiram K. 11
LANDRU, N. K. 11
LARSON, Colburn 12
LAW, John 22, 26
LEWIS, Peter 11, 12
LINN, Arthur 19, 20
LUNSETT & JENSON 22, 27
LUTZ, C. 11

MABEN, John 12
MAHONEY, J. W. 22, 26
MARTIN, Daniel 12
MILLINGTON, John 13
MURRAY, Archibald 12

NELSON, Louis 12, 13

OLMSTEAD & RANSOM 22, 27
OLMSTEAD, W. W. 27
OULMAN, Augustus 11

PETERSON, Oliver 12
PLUMMER, Ira 12
PORTER, William 12

RNETHY, W. J. 25
AN, Henry 12
ROSE, J. H. T. 11
ERSON, Christian 12
ERSON, John 12

WELL, George M. 25
NER & KNUDTSON 22
NER, R. H. 22, 26
RAS, Thomas 12, 14, 15
SON, --- 7, 17
NNERHASSETT, A. 22, 27
WERS, John S. 11, 12
AR, J. C. 12
SFORD, H. S. 11
D, J. K. 11
NES, A. N. 12
WN, T. E. 11
GARDNER, M. 11
NAP & SECOR 22, 24
NAP, W. A. 24

RCH, Dr. William 11
K, Robert 11, 12, 15, 16, 22, 23
, P. N. 22, 26
, A. T. 12
PER, M. 11, 22, 27
TIS, A. K. 11

C. H. 11
LOW, B. F. 11

R, R. 22

ER, Dr. William 11

HARWOOD, J. C. 19,
HAYWARD, W. C. 11,
HILL, J. B. 17
HINMAN, E. D. 11
HITT, Jamel L. 12

IVERSON, John 12

JENSON & LUNSETT 22,
JOHNSON, John 12
JONES, Dr. W. H. 22,

KELLY, William 19
KNUDSON, H. J. 12
KNUDTSON & BAHNER 22
KNUDTSON, K. 26

LANDRU, Hiram K. 11
LANDRU, N. K. 11
LARSON, Colburn 12
LAW, John 22,
LEWIS, Peter 11,
LINN, Arthur 19,
LUNSETT & JENSON 22,
LUTZ, C. 11

MABEN, John 12
MAHONEY, J. W. 22,
MARTIN, Daniel 12
MILLINGTON, John 13
MURRAY, Archibald 12

NELSON, Lewis 12,

RANSOM & OLMSTEAD 22, 27
RANSOM, T. C. 27

- -

SCOTT, C. W. 11
SECOR & BURNAP 22, 24
SECOR, David 11, 24
SECOR, Eugene 11, 12, 22, 25
SHAY, A. L. 11, 12
SMITH, Charles D. 12, 16, 17
STEADMAN, C. A. 11
STEPHENS, Robert 12
STILSON, E. L. 11, 12, 22
STILSON, L. 17
STOCKTON, E. D. 11

- -

TENNIS, Philip 12
TENNIS, Samuel 11, 12

- -

WADSWORTH, S. D. 17
WESTBURY, W. 22, 26
WHITE, Dr. --- 10

- -